PROFESSOR RUDOLF RICHTER

(7th NOVEMBER 1881—5th JANUARY 1957)

Rudolf Richter, Professor of Geology and Palaeontology in the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main from 1925 to 1949, and Director of the Senckenberg Museum in the same city from 1933 to 1946, justly deserved his world-wide reputation for accurate work and extensive knowledge of trilobites. His publications on this group were spaced over 47 years and in his last days he was concluding his descriptions of certain trilobite families for the forthcoming *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology.* The loss of his generous help will be keenly felt by many palaeontologists and geologists, and particularly by young students living beyond the confines of his own country.

As stated in an earlier Part of this volume of the *Bulletin* (Part 1, published on 25th January), Rudolf Richter served as one of the German representatives of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature from 1930 to 1940 and, when Germany was cut off from the Commission's headquarters during the war years, he continued to describe himself, in relevant publications, as a member of this Commission during and immediately after the war. Eminent palaeontologists such as Bather, F. Chapman, Dollo, Handlirsch and Osborn are amongst Richter's seniors who have served as Commissioners, but by precept and practice, Richter was perhaps the most active and effective palaeontological exponent of the work of the Commission. Perusal of Richter's trilobite taxonomic studies reveals a succession of his discoveries and corrections of nomenclatorial errors committed by previous workers, and even of some which he had himself perpetrated. He wrote many short papers and critical reviews in support of stability of nomenclature according to the international code.

His *Einführung in die Zoologische Nomenklatur durch Erläuterung der Internationalen Regeln* published during the war in 1943 by the Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft was a successful counterblast to an attempt by some of his countrymen to impose upon German scientists a national, in place of an international, code of nomenclature. This publication appeared in a revised edition in 1948 and the profits from its sale were used towards the cost of rebuilding the war-damaged Senckenberg Museum. It is a 252-paged book, well meriting a place in every palaeontologist's library. He devoted 130 pages to the 36 Articles of the Rules with supplementary amplifying notes commonly quoting palaeontological examples. Preceding these is a general section indicating the relationship between nomenclature and taxonomy, also the desirability of international rules of procedure, and in particular, that palaeontology should follow the nomenclatorial codes of botany and zoology

Bull. zool. Nomencl. Vol. 13, Part 5. May 1957.

respectively, rather than attempt to rationalise a restricted code applicable only to fossils. Richter wisely deplored the fate of palaeontology if it should become only a cross between philately and the worship of index fossils. In his discussion of Article 8, he disparaged the creation of puns in constructing generic names, though somewhat ironically he and Frau Dr. Emma Richter have been perpetuated nomenclatorially in the trilobite name *Reraspis*, a play on the initial letters of their names.

Richter was outspoken concerning the desirability of adequate illustration of fossil species ; not only when discussing Article 25 in this book but in several of his papers, he recalled the decision of the Second International Geological Congress, Bologna, 1881, that " A l'avenir, pour les noms spécifiques, la priorité ne sera irrévocablement acquise que lorsque l'espèce aura été non seulement décrit, mais figurée " ; and he expressed the hope that the Zoological Congress would ratify this decision for fossil animals even as the Botanists had done for fossil plants. In his own work he recognised no fossiled species or genera created after 1882 without illustration or reference to previous illustration. He pointed out the disadvantages of photographic illustration alone ; his own systematic works, mostly written in co-authorship with his wife Dr. Emma Richter, who predeceased him in November 1956, were admirably illustrated by her line- and wash-drawings, though latterly the Richters used a combination of photographs and drawings.

Born at Glatz in Silesia, Richter studied at the universities of Munich and Marburg, taking his phil. nat. doctorate at the latter university in 1908, with a thesis on Devonian trilobites from the Rhineland. He married in 1913 and joined the staff at Frankfurt in 1920 as Dozent in the Geological-Palaeontological Institute. His classic work on the Upper Devonian trilobites was published in 1926. He wrote much on the relationships of structure of life habits of trilobites ; his observations on the loss of eyes in different lineages and on the dating of the various extinction times of different families were especially important, as also was the evidence he adduced concerning the relationship of the occurrence of trilobites to the interpretation of stratigraphical geology. In later years the Richters' attention was turned to description of Cambrian trilobite faunas in the Mediterranean region and of Carboniferous genera and species.

An outstanding feature of Richter's other activities was his service to the Museum and to the Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft in Frankfurt. Not only was he the first editor of *Senckenbergiana*, a periodical founded in 1919 to mark the centenary of that society, but in 1928, he brought into being the Senckenberg Forschungsstelle für Meeresgeologie und Meerespaläontologie at Wilhelmshaven, which subsequently was known as " Senckenberg am Meer ". Furthermore he took over editorship of the *Abhandlungen* of the society in 1935 and for many years he also edited the Society's popular and beautifully illustrated magazine *Natur und Museum*, later called *Natur und Volk*. As a testimony to his skill as a teacher and of the respect that he engendered, there is the 70th Birthday *Festschrift* volume of 336 pages and 54 plates contributed by nine of his former students and by four of his friends, covering a wide range of geological topics and published as *Abhandlung* 485 of the Senckenberg Society in 1951.

He was elected president of the International Paleontological Union in 1933 and of the Paläontologische Gesellschaft in 1948 ; a Correspondent of the Paleontological Society of America in 1926 and a Foreign Fellow of the Geological Society of London in 1950. In 1951, he received the Hans Stille Medal of the Deutsche Geologische Gesellschaft. He died at Frankfurt am Main, aged 75, leaving science much richer by his work.

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